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Lansdale Reports for Viet Duty

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SAIGON, Aug. 29.—The retired U.S. Air Force general who will concentrate on South Viet-Nam's frustrated social revolution arrived without fanfare today to take up his vaguely defined duties as special assistant to Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge.

Maj. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale, whose unorthodox approach frequently upset Pentagonians in the past, flew in from Hong Kong saying he felt he had arrived home.

He pointedly avoided discussing his duties here, which are to channel more U.S. Mission emphasis into grassroots reforms to attempt to balance the enormous American military buildup which becomes more evident every day.

"Viet-Nam represents a whole social revolution," he said, often frustrated and even betrayed, but destined for success in the future."

Lansdale, a slow-spoken man who delivered a statement which he had prepared carefully, was met at the airport by high-ranking embassy aides, but not by the ambassador himself.

Although mission sources said Lodge would not go to the airport to greet anyone below cabinet rank, it was noted that Lodge arrived a

few moments after Lansdale's departure to greet Philippines Gen. Jesus Vargas, recently named Secretary General of SEATO who had hoped to say hello to Lansdale.

"I have no team of my own," Lansdale told newsmen today. "There will be a little group of us working closely together under the direction of Ambassador Lodge."

"I am not a very good office man," he said in reply to a question whether he would be working mostly in Saigon. He said he would be working entirely in the civilian field.

Although he speaks no Vietnamese—"I am not good at languages" he said—he will be establishing contacts among Vietnamese intellectuals and politicians and religious leaders.

Lodge had asked him about 10 days or two weeks ago to join him in Saigon, he said, and "I had the happy feeling that he was really asking me to come home again."

Home was not always happy here in his earlier days, when he locked horns first with American officialdom and later with the late President Ngo Dinh Diem when the latter shrugged off popular reform proposals.